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PREGNANT DEPORTEE FROM BENGAL RETURNS TO INDIA ON ORDERS OF SC

Sunali Khatun, arrested by Delhi Police on suspicion of being a Bangladeshi and deported in June, was repatriated via Malda border

TORTURE LIVING IN SOLITARY CELL: SUNALI

Sunali, who is in an advanced stage of pregnancy, was a migrant resident of Murarai in West Bengal's Birbhum. She was admitted to the Rampurhat hospital in Birbhum, where she will remain under observation. "It was a torture living in a solitary cell of the Bangladeshi prison," she said, recounting her hundred days at a correctional facility in Bangladesh

TRINAMOOL CALLS IT VICTORY OF OPPRESSED

- Trinamool Congress MP Samirul Islam, who steered the legal battle for Sunali and the five other deportees, described her return as "a victory of the oppressed against the might of the Central government"
- Delhi Police had arrested Sunali, husband Danesh and her minor son in June and branded them "illegal immigrants" before expelling them

6 months

IS THE TIME THE WOMAN FROM BIRBHUM STAYED AWAY FROM INDIA

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

SOME LEGACIES AREN'T TOLD. THEY'RE WOVEN

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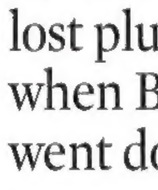
Banu: India lost pluralism when Babri went down

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

DECEMBER 6 is a special day for Indians as it marks both the death anniversary of Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar and the demolition of Babri Masjid, commented International Booker Prize winner **Banu Mushtaq**, who is also a lawyer and activist, delivering the keynote address at the 14th edition of the Bangalore Literature Festival (BLF) at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Saturday.

"On the one hand, it is Dr Ambedkar's day of 'parinirvana'. His thoughts and principles went on to become the law of the land and moral values. Liberty, equality and brotherhood are not only the trinity of the Constitution but the very reason for every individual's mental and physical discipline. It reminds us that these three should become a part of the moral process in our lives and society. This day also reminds us of the demolition of Babri Masjid which hurt the sentiments of many people. It forces us to rethink our actions. India lost its principle of pluralism on the day of Babri Masjid demolition. It is essential for us to not only see history from the point of destruction or pain it caused, but also think of what moral values we should build among people." P2



Tharoor praises Modi for gifting Gita to Putin

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor was all praise for PM Modi for giving a copy of Bhagavad Gita in Russian to Russian President Vladimir Putin. He, however, expressed regret that Opposition leaders, especially, Rahul Gandhi, were not invited for the state banquet hosted by President Draupadi Murmu in Putin's honour P2

Maintaining pricing discipline

The objective is to maintain pricing discipline, prevent any exploitation of passengers in distress, and ensure that citizens who urgently need to travel are not subjected to financial hardship, the Union govt said

UP TO 500 KM	500-1,000 KM	1,000-1,500 KM	OVER 1,500 KM
₹7,500	₹12,000	₹15,000	₹18,000

Fare caps exclude User Development Fee, Passenger Development Fee & other taxes | They do not cover Business class tickets and flights operated under UDAN scheme | No clarity yet on whether the caps for economy class tickets apply for premium economy as well

TICKET AVAILABILITY

Airlines must maintain ticket availability across all fare buckets. They may increase capacity on high-demand sectors, govt said

Ticket price before fare cap kicked in

Govt caps fares, wields whip

IndiGo CEO gets DGCA show-cause notice; 800 cancellations on Sat; ticket refund by Sun

S LALITHA @ New Delhi

THE Ministry of Civil Aviation on Saturday stepped in to address the greed of some airlines exploiting the IndiGo mess as fares went beyond 8X on some sectors. It imposed strict caps on domestic fares with the maximum of ₹18,000 for an economy class ticket. Later in the day, the Director General of Civil Aviation slapped a show-cause notice on IndiGo's CEO to respond within 24 hours why action should not be taken against him for the unprecedented chaos.

The ministry also directed IndiGo to clear all pending passenger refunds for all cancelled or disrupted flights by 8 pm on Sunday, December 7.

The fare cap of ₹7,500-18,000 (see graphic) prescribed by the ministry was still on the higher side, with fliers being made to pay for the needless chaos. These caps will remain in place "until fares stabilise or till further review", the ministry said.

The caps exclude levies like User Development Fee, Passenger Development Fee and other taxes. They do not cover Business class tickets and flights operated under the regional connectivity scheme (UDAN), the order stated.

As for refunding, the ministry cautioned that any delay or non-compliance by Indigo would invite immediate regulatory action. The system of automatic refunds will remain active until operations stabilise completely.

IndiGo quickly responded with a "No questions asked. All refunds for your cancellations will be processed automatically to your original mode of payment." The airline also announced full waiver on all cancellations/reschedule requests of bookings made between December 5 and December 15.

In another directive, the ministry directed IndiGo to ensure that all baggage that was separated from passengers due to cancellations or delays be traced and delivered to each passenger's residential or chosen address within 48 hours.

IndiGo for the first time obliquely quantified the day's cancellations — around 800. "By the end of day, we would have operated over 1,500 flights. With regards to destinations, over 95% of network connectivity has already been re-established as we are able to operate to 135 out of the existing 138 destinations in operations. There is a recovery," IndiGo said.

A passenger rests while waiting at Terminal 1 of the Indira Gandhi International Airport for her flight, in New Delhi on Saturday | PTI

Airlines have also been instructed not to levy any rescheduling charges for passengers whose travel plans were affected by cancellations

- Ministry of Civil Aviation's order

Bus fares from B'luru to Mumbai hit ₹9,000

INDRA S @ Bengaluru

AFTER IndiGo's mass flight cancellations affected travel plans of thousands of flyers across the country, private bus operators seized the moment and jacked up fares to exorbitant levels.

Bus fares from Bengaluru to Mumbai touched nearly Rs 9,000, while similar steep hikes were noticed to destinations like Ahmedabad and Pune, leaving stranded passengers with few affordable options.

Nataraj Sharma, president, Karnataka Private Bus Owners' Association, said the bus fares surged sharply after flight cancellations, with operators charging four to eight times the usual rates. He condemned the practice, adding that on Friday, some out-of-state operators charged up to Rs 13,000 for a Bengaluru to Mumbai ticket, exploiting passengers desperate to find alternative transport.

"As of Saturday, anyone travelling to Mumbai or Pune is paying no less than Rs 3,000, and prices are going up to nearly Rs 9,000," he said.

Shobhit Saurabh, complaining about the price he paid for a bus ticket, said, "I booked an IndiGo flight for Rs 5,000. It was cancelled, with the airline apologising and promising a refund. Now, I have booked a bus ticket for Rs 8,000 to travel from Pune to Bengaluru, which is much more than my flight fare." P5

BUS FARES FROM B'LURU TO...

MUMBAI	Rs 3,000 - Rs 9,000
PUNE	Rs 2,800 - Rs 8,700
AHMEDABAD	Rs 3,000 - Rs 7,000

Source: Online bus ticket booking platforms (Dec 7)

EXPRESS READ

Mysuru, Kalaburagi to get NIMHANS: Minister

BENGALURU: NIMHANS-like institutes will be set up in Mysuru and Kalaburagi at ₹100 crore each, said Medical Education Minister Dr Sharan Prakash Patil, on Saturday. "These two institutions need to be handheld by NIMHANS Bengaluru," he said P6

More punitive measures sought against LeT, JeM

NEW DELHI: India and the US have sought additional punitive measures like asset freeze and arms embargo by the UN against Pakistan-based terror outfits Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad, their proxy groups and backers

K'taka power tussle: Sonia steps in, talks to continue

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

AMID the ongoing power tussle in Karnataka, Parliamentary Party leader Sonia Gandhi on Saturday intervened for the first time, holding talks with senior Congress leaders in the national capital. All-India Congress Committee (AICC) president Mallikarjun Kharge, LoP in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, and general secretary (Organisation) KC Venugopal were present in the meeting, which lasted for around three hours.

According to sources, no decision emerged from the meeting, while officially it was described as a review of the "current political situation". The leadership is expected to meet again, likely on December 14 or 15. That meeting is likely after the Congress mega rally on 'vote theft' scheduled on December 14 at the Ramlila Ground in Delhi. The leaders decided that there should be no disturbance to the state government till the next meeting.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy CM DK Shivakumar, who are at the centre of the row, are also expected to attend the discussions, said a party leader familiar with the developments.

After the meeting, Venugopal told reporters that Karnataka figured in the meeting. "There was a general discussion on the current political situation, including Karnataka. But nothing concrete emerged today. There will be another discussion on Karnataka," he said. Incidentally, this is the first time that the top leader publicly acknowledged the ongoing developments, though such concerns were routinely dismissed in the past.

The meeting came after Venugopal's closed-door meeting with Siddaramaiah in Mangaluru last week, though the details of their discussion remain unknown. In recent days, Siddaramaiah and his deputy Shivakumar have sought to project a united front with 'breakfast diplomacy' to reassure party workers that 'all is well' between them. The meeting held over breakfast was reportedly at the behest of Venugopal to ease tensions between the two leaders and to project a show of unity ahead of the upcoming leadership deliberations.

India team celebrates 2-1 ODI series win against South Africa in Visakhapatnam on Saturday | G SATYANARAYANA

ODI BALM FOR TEST SCAR

GOMESH S @ Chennai

AFTER the famine, the feast? Not quite but Indian cricket, after enduring a shambolic 0-2 Test series defeat against the visiting South Africans, has something to smile about after a 2-1 ODI series win. After sitting through the disappointments of Kolkata and Guwahati, Indian fans would have welcomed the familiar rhythms of watching Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma playing pivotal roles in the wins.

Of course, this is nothing new. India continues to enjoy unparalleled dominance in white-ball cricket at home. Sure, one can argue that the three-match ODI series was almost devoid of context as the 50-over World Cup is two years away in very different conditions. But this win is a reminder of the talent that exists in India across formats even if they were missing multiple players either through rest or injury.

Question marks will persist over the medium-term futures of Kohli and Sharma but they know that as long as they perform, they will be undroppable whatever the management and the selectors think about them keeping in mind the World Cup in 2027.

If the seniors led the way, Ruturaj Gaikwad and Yashasvi Jaiswal staked their claim in the team with a century each. The former was asked to bat at No 4 by the management and he delivered with a ton in the second match. Jaiswal's hundred came as the icing on the cake on Saturday. Kohli and Sharma have three more ODIs to look forward to before disappearing from the national setup for at least six months.

As of now, it's over to the T20Is for India. P15

Try mediation, says SC in case of sexual abuse

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

THE Supreme Court on Friday urged parties involved in a sexual harassment case against Venu Gopalakrishnan, CEO of Kochi's Litmus 7 Systems Consulting, to explore mediation to resolve their dispute.

A bench comprising Justices B V Nagarathna and K V Viswanathan said, "...We find that in the interest of all parties, there ought to be a settlement. The matter is referred to the Supreme Court Mediation Centre. The parties are directed to appear before the Centre on 07.01.2026 in person or through videoconferencing."

On September 11, the Kerala High Court had denied anticipatory bail to Gopalakrishnan, citing the "very serious" nature of allegations. The other accused in the case — Jacob P Thampy, Eby Paul, and Bimalraj Haridas — were granted anticipatory bail.

Gopalakrishnan had approached the Supreme Court, which on September 26 stayed all coercive actions against him. Senior counsels Mukul Rohatgi and Raghenth Basant, representing the petitioner, said the complainant, a former employee, had filed the charges after getting bail in an extortion case initiated by Gopalakrishnan.

Justice Nagarathna expressed skepticism about the harassment claims. The accused alleged the woman and her husband had demanded ₹30 crore during a hotel meeting on July 23, including an immediate ₹10 crore transfer, with ₹50,000 transferred from Venu's account on July 28. The couple was arrested for extortion soon after. The woman denied knowledge of the ₹50,000 transfer and alleged sexual harassment. The next hearing is on February 2.

In a first, UK goes after terror outfit Babbar Khalsa

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

THE UK Treasury imposed sanctions on a British national and an organisation for alleged terrorist activity in India and support for the Sikh extremist group Babbar Khalsa. This is the first time London has used its domestic counter-terrorism framework to target the pro-Khalistan group, officials said.

The measures include an asset freeze and director disqualification against Gurpreet Singh Rehal, who is suspected of involvement in organisations carrying out terrorist activities in India. The Treasury also imposed an asset freeze on Babbar Akali Lehar, an organisation accused of promoting and supporting Babbar Khalsa.

According to the UK Treasury, Rehal is involved in Babbar Khalsa and Babbar Akali Lehar's activities, including recruitment, financial support, and procurement of weapons and military material. Babbar Akali Lehar, the Treasury said, engages in similar activities by promoting, encouraging, and recruiting for Babbar Khalsa. All funds and economic resources in the UK owned, held, or controlled by Rehal or Babbar Akali Lehar are now frozen.

UK individuals and entities were prohibited from dealing with these assets or providing financial services to them without a licence from the Treasury. Rehal was also barred from acting as a company director or participating in company management, directly or indirectly.

Economic Secretary to the Treasury Lucy Rigby said: "We will not stand by while terrorists exploit Britain's financial system. This landmark action shows we are prepared to use every tool at our disposal to choke off funding for terrorism -- wherever it occurs and whoever is responsible. The UK stands firmly with peaceful communities against those who promote violence and hatred."

The sanctions were imposed under the Counter-Terrorism (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, which empower the Treasury to freeze assets and restrict individuals or entities suspected of involvement in terrorism, safeguarding the UK's financial system.